

Rhode Island Public Charter Schools: **Renewal Application**

Office of Charter Schools

Rhode Island Department of Education

2014-2015

OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS | RIDE | 255 WESTMINSTER STREET, PROVIDENCE, RI 02903

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Introduction

The Rhode Island Board of Education is charged with making charter school renewal decisions; to do so, the Board relies on recommendations from the Commissioner. The Commissioner's recommendation and the Board's renewal decision will be based on affirmative evidence regarding the success of a charter school's educational program, its viability as an organization, and its faithfulness in meeting the terms of its charter.

Two primary sources of evidence inform the Commissioner's recommendation:

- 1) A *renewal report* produced by RIDE
- 2) A *renewal application* produced by the charter school

All Rhode Island charter schools seeking renewal must complete a *renewal application*. The renewal application serves two key functions: 1) the formal submission serves as confirmation that the charter school board is seeking a renewal of its charter; and 2) it provides an opportunity for schools to reflect on performance to date, and to articulate strategies for sustaining success and improving over the next charter term. While charter accountability is primarily based on past performance, not plans for the future, a renewal application that provides a clear description of how the school intends to address ongoing challenges and strengthen all aspects of its operations provides important context about the school's history and trajectory. The renewal application is a core piece of RIDE's renewal review, and it enables a comprehensive assessment of school performance.

The renewal application should be concise and complete. It should not require further explanation or clarification by the school. All necessary supporting documentation should be included as attachments, which should be limited to information that meaningfully supports or adds context to the evidence RIDE collects regarding school performance, and/or illustrates or supports plans or strategies described in the renewal application.

Finally, renewal applications should not present new aspirational plans that fundamentally change the structure or mission of the school. If the school wishes to amend its charter in the future to serve more students, reconfigure or expand to serve new grade levels, or otherwise fundamentally change its approach, the school should do so through RIDE's charter amendment process. The charter amendment process is separate from the charter renewal process.

Submission Instructions

Deadline

The renewal application deadline is set at a point after the renewal site visit but before RIDE has completed a draft of the renewal report. Charter schools need not wait for the renewal site visit to begin drafting the renewal application. However, schools may find that discussions arising during the renewal site visit may assist them in thinking about areas of focus for their renewal application.

The deadline for the RINIMC renewal application is: **by or before 5PM on Friday, March 6, 2015.**

Format

The renewal application should be formatted as follows:

- One-inch margins
- 12 point Times New Roman or comparable font
- At least 1.5 line spacing
- Page numbers throughout whole document (including appendices)
- A Table of Contents
- Please carefully proofread the entire submission.

Please submit the renewal application by or before the deadline **as a single PDF file** via email to drew.allsopp@ride.ri.gov. The renewal application should be compiled as a single PDF file. Please do not submit multiple files or folders. Hard copies are not required.

Renewal Application Requirements

1) Cover letter

Please include a one-page cover letter with signatures that includes:

- a. Charter school name
- b. Charter school mailing address, phone, and contact email
- c. A brief introduction to the renewal application
- d. Signature from an authorized member of the Board of Directors (e.g. Chair)
- e. Signature from chief administrator (e.g. principal, Head of School)

2) Mission

Provide the mission statement for the charter school and describe how the school has realized its mission over the last charter term. Please include specific examples of programs and/or activities that have supported the mission and make the mission an integral part of the school. (Two pages max).

3) Sustaining Success

Please identify multiple areas of academic and operational success over the life of the school's charter to date. Describe how the school will sustain academic and organizational success during the next charter term. (Seven pages max).

To describe the plan and strategies for sustaining success, please indicate:

- a. The rationale and supporting evidence that informs your belief that the school achieved success in this area
- b. How progress will be monitored and success will continue to be measured.

4) Challenges

Please provide information on the most challenging areas of operation over the life of the school's charter to date. Provide specific information on what steps were taken to address each challenge. Include information on any adopted policies, programs, practices, or structural changes made, as well as any metrics used for measuring improvement. (Seven pages max).

Relevant areas in which to discuss challenges may include:

- a. The governing board
- b. The leadership team
- c. Academic performance
- d. Financial health
- e. Organizational health

5) Closing

In closing, please briefly identify what the school hopes to achieve over the next charter term, if renewed.

NOTE: Page maximums are not meant to suggest response lengths. Shorter responses are welcome.

Attachments

The renewal application may be accompanied by supporting evidence in the form of attachments. Please label each attachment and include page numbers.

While there is no limit on the number of attachments schools may include, attachments should only be included if they are required to support or substantially clarify components of the renewal application narrative. All attachments should be cited and contextualized within the text of the renewal application. For example:

The board of <charter school name> has developed a strategic facilities plan to ensure that within two years our school can acquire a facility that will meet these programmatic challenges we have faced. (See Attachment 2 for the complete strategic facilities plan.)